

Camp Middelbrook 29th June 1777

My dear Harry

Expected a letter from you by the post and
~~was~~ exceedingly chagrined at the disappointment. I impute
 it not to carelessness or negligence in you, but that
 business had called you out of town, at the time of
 the departure of the post man -

I wrote you a pretty long letter by the
last post giving you a circumstantial account of
Mr. Howe's operations to Jersey and his return
to Brunswick and his retreat from thence to
Amberg. I then inform'd you that we should make
an movement with a great part of our army the
next day towards Amberg. Accordingly on the
morning of the 24th, Lord Sterling's Division consisting
of Maxwell's and Conway's Brigades, took post
near a place ~~near~~ extending themselves towards
Mettuchen meeting hence, and the main body
of the Army took post at Littleton at the
same time General Sullivan's Division which had
his station at Princeton, took post at ~~Jersey~~
Town, ~~again~~ will observe these places mark'd on the
Map which I enclose ~~to you~~. These different detachments
were taken with two views, to hinder the enemy
from making ~~any~~ incursions into ^{our} country, & to ~~prevent~~ ^{prevent} with

any thing less than their whole force. To watch their motions
and if possible to find the critical moment of embarkation to
Staten Island and to fall upon the remaining part of their
force — As the Juwara is distant from anchorage about 4 miles,
their situation was reconnoitred and found to be so strong as
to be impossible to be attack'd with a probability of success
— their right was covered but the sound of Staten Island, their
left by the mouth of the river Raritan, and their front
approachable only by one road, and they in possession of
the heights which commanded it — the enemy were
much engaged in transporting to Staten Island, their Horses
Wagons, baggage, and heavy Artillery, assisted by the
Sailors and Seamen of the fleet — they also transported
large bodies of troops to Staten Island — and from the information
received it was expected they would entirely evacuate
the Jersey in a day or two. Tho' this information was well
grounded and confirmed by the appearance of things yet
~~such arrangements~~ such arrangements were made as were
thought to effectually secure the troops, from a surprise
which the contiguity of the enemy might induce them
to attempt — The country where Lord Stirling was posted
was full of roads in all directions. The most practicable
of these were secured and parties of observation were placed
on the others. Things were in this situation on the morning of
the 26th when the enemy were discovered, ^{in force} to be very near
his headquarters Station, the troops were immediately put

in motion, but the enemy had pushed thro' one of the numerous
hills roads and separated the two Brigades. This was
the critical moment, and had the enemy made a proper
use of it the two Brigades must have been separated
from the rest of the Army and probably lost entirely. But
so much time was spent by them in making a disposition
that Genl Canby tho engaged with them retired to the main
body without any loss — Lord Stirling who was with
Maxwells brigade, was much engaged with the enemy
(who ~~lost~~ ^{lost} 8 or 10 times his force,) and obliged to retire ^{to Westfield} after a
sharp action with the loss of three field pieces and
50 or 60 killed wounded and taken prisoners. — after the
retreat of these two Brigades, the enemy pushed ^{with great industry} for the
heights on our left flank, upon the information of which
the army at Quibble Town, immediately marched
by the left and occupied the heights of the old camp
only more inclined to the left — The enemy
finding our situation such as not to be attacked with
impunity retired that night to Westfield, plundering
and destroying every thing before them. we had
large parties of light troops on their flanks which
kept ^{part of} the enemy from their intrenchment & ravages. — the
next day they marched for Frank Town & yesterday to
Lombay. Destroying and plundering every thing belonging
to the well affected Inhabitants, our parties were

were perpetually harassing these flanks and rear, from which
they took a number of prisoners. — This manoeuvre
of General Howe, was with three views, to surprise &
thrive - to draw Peter to a general action in the rear
- and to endeavor to gain some eclat from it to counterbalance
the disgrace of giving up New Jersey. — The loss of the
three pieces of cannon is to be regretted, ^{and the plunder} except which
he has gain'd but little advantage. — It is said
that superior officers among which was Mr. M. made use
of very contemptuous language against our army
— this to be sure is very humorous, & very consistent with
the common modes of War, that we should be oblig'd to
fight him on the ground of his own choosing - he was
within one mile and an half of our left flank which
he had it at his option to have attack'd, — he selected the
ground and has most successfully given out that we
would not fight, and is gaining the hour knowing
whither, in order to meet us on ground that
he has left unopposed to — This conduct of his is contrary
to the true interest of an Invader, who invariably ought
to bring the Defender of the Country to action
as soon as possible, and ~~as possible~~ every risk ought
to be run to effect it — From his baggage tents &
all other necessities being on Staten Island we expect he
will evacuate the Jersey either to day or tomorrow

We suppose his next move will be up Hudson River
altho they give our universality that they intend going
to New England. — The continuation of the troops on
Rhode Island seem to look like it — but if he
has not force sufficient to operate in the Jerseys
surely he has not enough for New England —

I wish to know how your regiment goes
on & what probability you have of raising it.
Should the enemy make a push your way
I think it would be completed immediately.

Give my love to all who think me
worthy of inquiry. Among which let there be your only
parents —

Pardon at the caution which you
have taken, of concealing your name, and yet
mentioning such circumstances, ~~as~~ as I identify my
letter you will beget a probability of a mistake.

Tho I do not so frequently offend
you with such epigrams and reflections as were
supposed to proceed more from levity than
Reflection, yet I have a strong sense of the protecting
hand of a kind providence to America and particularly
holland. That however since the trial she will
at last be triumphantly rid of the tyrant N.B.

Dear Madam
Yours affectionate friend
Thos

Charles Henry Johnson
Captain

Letter from my
Friend H K
June 29th 1777